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## HENDERSON'S "STONEWALL JACKSON."<sup>1</sup>

THIS biography will probably be accepted as the most impartial work yet published on the civil war in America. No just impeachment of its fairness can be made, whatever may be thought of its defects by critics of style. An English reviewer says in the *Academy* that the author is guilty of many inelegancies of expression, and alludes particularly to his use of the objectionable split infinitive. But it is not necessary for a trained soldier to know and be able to use all the best rules of style in order to write a most attractive biography. The story of the life and death of Stonewall Jackson, America's greatest genius in the art and practice of war, as told by Col. Henderson, will live as long as the language is spoken, in spite of the verbal critics. The large volumes, which are printed in the best possible manner, are supplied with maps and plans that make it easy to understand all the movements described in the text. The author's citations of authorities show the greatest research, and his acquaintance with the topography of the country (Virginia and Maryland) in which the battles he describes were fought is absolutely perfect. It is true that for once he falls into an insular state of mind, which we can readily forgive in an Englishman, when, in telling us of the first battle of Manassas, he describes Bull Run as a stream "of much the same width as the Thames at Oxford."<sup>2</sup> But from such trifles let us pass to the main story.

Thomas Jonathan Jackson was born on the 21st of January, 1824, in Clarksburg, the county seat of Harrison, then one of the counties of Virginia. At the time of his father's death, in 1827, every vestige of property had been swept away. His mother married a second time, but within a year

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<sup>1</sup> STONEWALL JACKSON AND THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR. By Lieut. Col. G. F. R. Henderson. 2 Vols. Longmans, Green & Co., London and New York. 1898.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. I., p. 166.

her little son Thomas stood beside her deathbed, and at the early age of six he was left a penniless orphan with two brothers and a sister who were dependent upon their kinsfolk for a living. While in the eastern part of Virginia the gentlemen who long swayed the councils of the nation constituted a true aristocracy, among whom were many men intimate with the best representatives of European culture, beyond the Alleghanies, where the future warrior grew up, there were no facilities for education, and few youths with leisure to enjoy them had they been offered. Young men had to serve a practical apprenticeship in lumbering and agriculture. Although Jackson's uncle was kind and wealthy, the boy had to work and to fight his own battles. While it was a hard school, it was a good one for a youth destined to be a soldier. From his earliest life he was known for truthfulness, politeness, and good manners. While not repining at his surroundings, he naturally longed for a larger life and continuously hungered for self-improvement. His manliness and earnestness of purpose caused him, at the early age of seventeen, to be appointed a constable of Harrison County, whose duty it was to execute the process of the magistrates' court.

While Jackson was thus growing to manhood Hon. Samuel L. Hays, a citizen and native of Pennsylvania, had removed to Virginia, from which State, as a Democrat, we find him elected to Congress and serving from May 31, 1841, to March 3, 1843, as a member of the twenty-seventh Congress. A vacancy occurred in the West Point cadetship in 1842 from his district. A friendly blacksmith informed Jackson that it existed. He immediately applied for appointment, with the indorsement of every one who knew him, and on going to Washington was given the place on the recommendation of Mr. Hays. Had he lived under the present competitive system of examinations, which Congressmen hold in all the districts of the United States, he would unquestionably have failed of appointment on account of his defective education. It is almost certain that he would not have been appointed, even at that time, from east of the Alleghanies, for the reason

that he was without influential family connections in Old Virginia.

Of his career at West Point and his honorable conduct in the Mexican War we can have nothing to say in this brief review, except that it was continuously upward and onward, as all who knew him anticipated it would be. But his resignation from the army and his life at the Virginia Military Institute is of too great interest to be passed over. In March, 1851, he was appointed Professor of Artillery Tactics and Natural Philosophy in the school at Lexington. It was his duty to lecture upon mathematics, but facts never appeared to him in a varied way so that he could easily and readily communicate them to his class. He had resigned his place in the army and accepted the professorship because he believed that garrison life would destroy him intellectually. In this connection Col. Henderson says:

In the well-stocked library of the institute he found every opportunity of increasing his professional knowledge. He was an untiring reader, and read to learn. The wars of Napoleon were his constant study. He was an enthusiastic admirer of his genius; the swiftness, the daring, and the energy of his movements appealed to his every instinct. Unfortunately, both for the institute and his popularity, it was not his business to lecture on military history. We can well imagine him as a teacher of the art of war, describing to the impressionable youths around him the dramatic incidents of some famous campaign, following step by step the skillful strategy that brought about such victories as Austerlitz and Jena. The advantage would then have been with his pupils; in the work assigned to him it was the teacher that benefited.<sup>1</sup>

The young professor's religious convictions were profound and his observance of the Sabbath was not in accordance with ordinary usage, even in that stricter period.<sup>2</sup> It is well known that he would not even read a letter nor post one on that day. "No duty, however trivial, was begun without asking or ended without returning thanks." He accepted the Bible literally as his guide, and lived up to all of its teachings as he understood them. He never varied from this course during his period of service in the Confederate States army, although he did not scruple to sleep during the sermons of the army chaplains.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 72, 73. <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76. <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 547.

He was thoroughly imbued with the Napoleonic idea that the world was to be conquered by the force of the intellect and devotion to duty. Col. Henderson thinks that there was much in the boyhood of Jackson that resembles the boyhood of Napoleon, and he cites the facts that both were affectionate, that Napoleon lived on bread and water that he might educate his brothers, and that Jackson saved his cadet's pay to give his sister a silk dress.

He had many peculiarities. While studying he sat bolt upright, for fear that if he bent over his work the compression of the internal organs might increase the tendency to an obscure disease with which he believed himself to be threatened.<sup>1</sup> His love of truth knew no bounds, and when once he lost confidence in one whom he trusted he ceased as far as possible to have any further dealings with him.<sup>2</sup> His literal accuracy of statement was construed as the mark of a narrow intellect, and his great modesty served to keep him in the background. It is certain that by the public he was thoroughly misunderstood. Col. Henderson thinks the calumny of Whittier's "Barbara Fritchie" may have found its source in the impression made upon his acquaintances in Lexington, who were out of sympathy with his high ideal of life and duty.<sup>3</sup> Be that as it may, the simple pages of his life as told by his widow present an almost ideal picture of domestic happiness, undimmed by the faintest glimpse of austerity or gloom.

With the exception of a short visit to Europe, he never traveled save in his own country. When the John Brown raid occurred, in 1859, the man whom we all know now as Stonewall Jackson remained hidden from public view, yet it is now clear that he had been cultivating in quiet that "marked intellectual capacity" which, as our author well says, "is the chief characteristic of the most famous soldiers. Alexander, Hannibal, Cæsar, Marlborough, Washington, Frederick, Napoleon, Wellington, and Nelson were each and all of them something more than fighting men. Few of

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26. <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77. <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

their age rivaled them in strength of intellect. It was this, combined with the best qualities of Ney and Blücher, that made them masters of strategy, and lifted them high above those who were tacticians and nothing more; and it was this that Jackson cultivated at Lexington.”<sup>1</sup>

He left Lexington for service in the Confederate army when he was thirty-five, having spent ten years there. He was about to become one of the chief actors in the most tremendous conflict ever waged on this continent, a conflict the merits of which have never been more fairly set forth than they are by Col. Henderson when he says: “I am very strongly of the opinion that any fair-minded man may feel equal sympathy with both Federal and Confederate. Both were so absolutely convinced that their cause was just, that it is impossible to conceive either Northerner or Southerner acting otherwise than as he did. If Stonewall Jackson had been a New Englander, educated in the belief that secession was rebellion, he would assuredly have shed the last drop of his blood in defense of the Union; if Ulysses Grant had been a Virginian, imbibing the doctrine of State rights with his mother’s milk, it is just as certain that he would have worn the Confederate gray. It is with those Northerners who would have allowed the Union to be broken, and with those Southerners who would have tamely surrendered their hereditary rights, that no Englishman would be willing to claim kinship.”<sup>2</sup>

The causes of the war have been stated with equal fairness by our author. He well says that, had the calumnies of “Uncle Tom’s Cabin,” which were scattered broadcast by the abolitionists, possessed more than a vestige of truth, men like Lee and Jackson would never have remained silent. In the minds of the Northern people slavery was associated with atrocious cruelty and continual suffering. But in the eyes of the people of the South it was associated with great kindness and the most affectionate relations between the planters and their bondsmen. But let us let our author speak:

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<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 94. <sup>2</sup>Preface, p. 13.

Slavery was recognized in fifteen States of the Union. In the North it had long been abolished, but this made no difference to its existence in the South. The States which composed the Union were semi-independent communities, with their own legislatures, their own magistrates, their own militia, and the power of the purse. How far their sovereign rights extended was a matter of contention; but, under the terms of the constitution, slavery was a domestic institution, which each individual State was at liberty to retain or discard at will, and over which the Federal government had no control whatever. Congress would have been no more justified in declaring that the slaves in Virginia were free men than in demanding that Russian conspirators should be tried by jury. Nor was the philanthropy of the Northern people, generally speaking, of an enthusiastic nature. The majority regarded slavery as a necessary evil; and, if they deplored the reproach to the republic, they made little parade of their sentiments. A large number of Southerners believed it to be the happiest condition for the African race; but the best men, especially in the border States, of which Virginia was the principal, would have welcomed emancipation. But neither Northerner nor Southerner saw a practicable method of giving freedom to the negro. Such a measure, if carried out in its entirety, meant ruin to the South. Cotton and tobacco, the principal and most lucrative crops, required an immense number of hands, and in those hands—his negro slaves—the capital of the planter was locked up. Emancipation would have swept the whole of this capital away. Compensation, the remedy applied by England to Jamaica and South Africa, was hardly to be thought of. Instead of twenty millions sterling, it would have cost four hundred millions. It is doubtful, too, if compensation would have staved off the ruin of the planters. The labor of the free negro, naturally indolent and improvident, was well known to be most inefficient, as compared with that of the slave. For some years, to say the least, after emancipation it would have been impossible to work the plantation except at heavy loss. Moreover, abolition, in the judgment of all who knew him, meant ruin to the negro. Under the systems of the plantations, honesty and morality were gradually being instilled into the colored race. But these virtues had, as yet, made little progress; the Christianity of the slaves was but skin-deep; and if all restraints were removed, if the old ties were broken, and the influence of the planter and his family should cease to operate, it was only too probable that the four millions of Africans would relapse into the barbaric vices of their original condition. The hideous massacres which had followed emancipation in San Domingo had not yet been forgotten. It is little wonder, then, that the majority shrank from a problem involving such tremendous consequences.”<sup>1</sup>

The charge that secession was intended to preserve slavery was concocted by the abolitionists to cloak their own revolt against the constitution. There were 8,300,000 whites in the fifteen slaveholding States; only 346,000 were slave-

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 97-99.

holders, and of these 69,000 owned only one negro each. "Secession in fact was a protest against mob rule."<sup>1</sup> The people were thoroughly imbued with the idea that secession was right, and that the State, as a State, was a separate unit which could be severed from the Union whenever the people thought proper to exercise such right. The idea of national unity had taken possession of the Northern people, but it had found no substantial support at the South. It is doubtless true that Jackson would not have established slavery; but it was no stumbling-block to him, for he saw it authorized in the Bible. The people of the North were firmly resolved to preserve the unity of the nation, and the people of the South were equally firmly resolved to disrupt it. The South from the beginning had to contend against "overwhelming numbers and resources," but both sections rose with equal unanimity and the most unshakable resolution.

While the nucleus of the regular army and all the navy remained with the North, neither side realized in 1861, or for a considerable period of time afterwards, the great magnitude of the struggle. The immensity of the theater of war was appalling. The city of Atlanta, which may be considered as the heart of the Confederacy, was sixty days' march from the Potomac, the same distance as Vienna from the English Channel or Moscow from the Niemen. New Orleans, the commercial metropolis, was thirty-six days' march from the Ohio, the same distance as Berlin from the Moselle.

The armies on both sides were without a trained staff or an efficient administration. Among the men in power there was no clear understanding of the difficulties to be overcome. A march of eighty or one hundred miles into the enemy's country sounds like a simple feat, but unless every detail has been most carefully thought out, it will most probably be more disastrous than a lost battle. "A march of two or three hundred miles is a great military operation; a march of six hundred, an enterprise of which there are few examples."<sup>2</sup> All these difficulties and many others both sides

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 130.



had to contend with at the famous first battle of Manassas. It is not here necessary to tell how the gallant South Carolinian, Gen. Bee, gave Jackson at the head of his stanch Virginians on that famous field the immortal name of "Stonewall," nor to attempt to unweave that web of reasons why the Federals lost the fight and why the Southern troops stopped the pursuit, which had degenerated into an ignominious flight of McDowell's men for the defenses of Washington. It is certain that for three days Jackson waited for the order to advance, his men having three days' cooked rations in their haversacks. But his superiors gave no sign, and he was reluctantly compelled to give up all hopes of reaping the fruits of victory. He went into that fight almost unknown; he came out of it recognized as a great military genius.

Very shortly afterwards he was ordered to the Valley of Virginia. His marches and battles there have most frequently been compared with those of the great Napoleon in his campaign in Italy. He demonstrated the fallacy of passive defense; and while the strategy which sent him there might have been suggested by Gen. Lee, his movements in the field, both tactical and strategic, were entirely his own. From the fight at Kernstown to his splendid handling of Banks and Shields at Cross Keys and Port Republic there was a continuous series of brilliant victories. He made no mistakes; and had his men been veteran soldiers, there is no evidence that Napoleon himself could have obtained better results from them. All the world knows that Napoleon's Italian campaign of 1796 was wonderful, but Col. Henderson questions whether in some respects Stonewall Jackson's Valley campaign was not more brilliant.

The odds against the Confederates were far greater than against the French. Jackson had to deal with a homogeneous enemy, with generals anxious to render each other loyal support, and not with the contingents of different States. His marches were far longer than Napoleon's. The theater of war was not less difficult. His troops were not veterans, but in great part the very rawest of recruits. The enemy's officers and soldiers were not inferior to his own; their leaders were at least equal in capacity to Colli, Beaulieu, and Alvinzi, and the statesmen who directed them were not more purblind than the Aulic Council. Moreover, Jack-

son was merely the commander of a detached force, which might at any moment be required at Richmond. The risks which Napoleon freely accepted he could not afford. He dared not deliver battle unless he was certain of success, and his one preoccupation was to lose as few men as possible. But be this as it may, in the secrecy of the Confederate movements, the rapidity of the marches, and the skillful use of topographical features, the Valley campaign bears strong traces of Napoleonic methods.”<sup>1</sup>

In these famous campaigns Jackson first used his cavalry as a veil to cover his movements as Von Moltke afterwards so successfully did in his invasion of France in 1870. In fact, the conditions under which cavalry can be now used in war were thoroughly understood and appreciated by Jackson—perhaps better than by any other officer on either side. He thought that military success in the field was largely dependent upon concealing his movements from the enemy, and the use he made of his cavalry was for this purpose.

It is very evident that his men did not understand the importance of discipline. Many uncritical estimates have been published of the alleged superiority of the Southern over the Northern soldiers. In point of fact there was no such difference. Neither side, in Col. Henderson’s opinion, can claim a superiority of martial qualities. At the beginning of the war the Confederates probably had a more technical skill, being better shots and finer riders. “But they were neither braver nor more enduring, and while they probably derived some advantage from the fact that they were defending their homes, the Federals, defending the integrity of their native land, were fighting in the noblest of all causes.” The assertion, so often met, that the Union armies were mainly composed of mercenary foreigners is not founded upon facts. “At no period of the war did the proportion of native Americans serving in the Northern armies sink below seventy per cent.”<sup>2</sup>

These fighting qualities must be taken into account by all those who would form a correct idea of the magnitude of the struggle and of the splendid leadership of Stonewall Jackson in the Valley, at Gaines’s Mill, Fredericksburg, Cedar

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 515-517. <sup>2</sup> Vol. II. p. 418.

Run, the bloody battle of Second Manassas, and indeed all the battles in which he took a part. Notwithstanding their valor, it is more than probable that the Southern soldiers never fully understood the importance of discipline. It is a very general impression in America that patriotism and intelligence are of vastly more importance than the habit of obedience. This false conception should have been effectually dispelled—certainly in the North—by the battle of Bull Run; but it was not, and much was said about the "thinking bayonet," and the term "machine-made soldier," used by Gen. D. H. Hill, was a term of reproach. The same idea lasted to the end in the South, and gives our author occasion for the following weighty paragraphs:

In fact, the Southern soldier, ignorant at the outset of what may be accomplished by discipline, never quite got rid of the belief that the enthusiasm of the individual, his good will, and his native courage were a more than sufficient substitute. "The spirit which animates our soldiers," wrote Lee, "and the natural courage with which they are so liberally endowed, have led to a reliance upon these good qualities, to the neglect of measures which would increase their efficiency and contribute to their safety." Yet the soldier was hardly to blame. Neither he nor his regimental officers had any previous knowledge of war when they were suddenly launched against the enemy, and there was no time to instill into them the habits of discipline. There was no regular army to set them an example; no historic force whose traditions they would unconsciously have adopted. The exigencies of the service forbade the men being retained in camps of instruction, and trained instructors could not be spared from more important duties.

Such ignorance, however, as that which prevailed in the Southern ranks is not always excusable. It would be well for those who pose as the friends of the private soldier, as his protectors from injustice, to realize the mischief they may do by injudicious sympathy. The process of being broken to discipline is undoubtedly galling to the instincts of freemen, and it is beyond question that among a multitude of superiors some will be found who are neither just nor considerate. Instances of hardship must inevitably occur. But men and officers—for discipline presses as hard on the officers as on the men—must obey, no matter at what cost to their feelings; for obedience to orders, instant and unhesitating, is not only the lifeblood of armies but the security of States; and the doctrine that, under any conditions whatever, deliberate disobedience can be justified is treason to the commonwealth.<sup>1</sup>

Jackson's success was due largely to his constant prepa-

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<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 443, 444.

ration in advance. He thought out the whole scheme of advance or retreat down to the minutest particulars, not even overlooking the most trivial details. The great Napoleon said that it was not genius that revealed to him suddenly and secretly what he should do in circumstances unsuspected by others; it was thought and meditation.<sup>1</sup> Jackson all his life possessed the power of intense concentration of thought and purpose. While he had this power to the highest degree, he was also careful to conceal his purposes and plans even from his officers. He held but one council of war.<sup>2</sup> He told his famous medical director, Dr. Hunter McGuire, when it was over, in a most savage tone: "That is the last council of war I will ever hold." It was his opinion that the best test of merit is success, and he fearlessly said: "The service cannot afford to keep a man who does not succeed."<sup>3</sup> That is the only test of merit which stops all critics, and the time will probably never come when the world will recognize any other.

Critics have charged that Jackson was late at the battle of Gaines's Mill. This cannot be denied; but the roads were obstructed and the bridges had been destroyed, and, in the opinion of the most competent military writers, he did all that could be expected of him. His failure to make a complete rout of the Federal army in any of the battles he fought was in no way owing to his neglect of the rules of war. It is now certain that he never fought any battle in which he was not immensely outnumbered at every point except that of attack. His last battle, the battle of Chancellorsville, was his greatest; and had he lived to finish it, it is more than probable that it would have resulted in the destruction of the Union army.

The Federals had intrenched themselves, and it was the opinion of the staff officers of Jackson, who had reconnoitered the enemy's front, that the position was practically impregnable from front attack. But Gen. J. E. B. Stuart reported that the weak point of the position was on the right. "Gen. Fitzhugh Lee, to whose skill and activity the

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<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 482. <sup>2</sup>Vol. I., pp. 282, 283. <sup>3</sup>Vol. II., p. 421.

victory at Chancellorsville was in great part due, had discovered that the Federal right, on the plank road, was completely in the air—that is, it was protected by no natural obstacle, and the breastworks faced south, and south only. It was evident that attack from the west or northwest was not anticipated, and Lee at once seized upon the chance of effecting a surprise.”<sup>1</sup>

Jackson led the great movement for the famous flank march. Of the complete surprise attending this movement the story is too long to tell here. The flank march was a long one, and the troops under Jackson were not ready for attack at the firing line until 6 P.M. of May 2, 1863. Their leader, “watch in hand, sat silent on ‘Little Sorrel,’ his slouched hat down low over his eyes, and his lips tightly compressed.” On his right was Gen. Rodes, and on Rodes’s right was Maj. Blackford. “Are you ready, Gen. Rodes?” asked Jackson. “Yes, sir,” was the reply. “You can go forward, sir,” said Jackson, and at a nod from Rodes Blackford ordered the bugle to sound the charge. It was the last order to charge Jackson was to hear, and the last time he was to lead his famous foot cavalry to victory. Into the wilderness they dashed, and he again heard above the roar of battle the thrilling rebel yell. The overwhelming rush of the Confederates was irresistible. Stonewall Jackson, in the gathering darkness and while within the firing line, was mistaken for the enemy and fired upon by the Eighteenth North Carolina. He was struck by three bullets, one in the right hand and two in the left arm, cutting the main artery and crushing the bone below the shoulder. Amputation was necessary, and he contracted pneumonia and died on May 10 as a heroic soldier should, before the noise of the battle had ceased. In his last hours his mind wandered. For some time he was unconscious, and then he cried out suddenly: “Order A. P. Hill to prepare for action! Pass the infantry to the front! Tell Maj. Hawks”—then he stopped, leaving the sentence unfinished. A little while before the end came he said quietly: “Let us cross

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<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 529.

over the river and rest under the shade of the trees," and the heart of America's greatest soldier had ceased to beat forever.

Stonewall Jackson was greater than any of the marshals of Napoleon, and after his death Lee never again attempted those great turning movements which had won his most brilliant victories. The reason for it was not far to seek: "There was not left in the army of the Confederacy a general to whom he dared confide the charge of the detached wing, and in possessing one such general he had been more fortunate than Napoleon."<sup>1</sup>

Space fails us for any account of Col. Henderson's rating of Jackson with other great generals, interesting as his pages are. He finds it hard to make the comparison with Lee, thinks him greater on the whole than Grant (to whom he is nevertheless just), and finds many traces of likeness to Wellington. His book leaves one almost with the impression that if Jackson had lived the Southern Confederacy would have established its independence. At least its perusal will force every candid reader to take a pride in this wonderful man, who always rose equal to every occasion, and to rejoice in his fame as a common heritage for all good Americans.<sup>2</sup>

S. S. P. PATTESON.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 243.

<sup>2</sup> We have found but one mistake of any consequence in Col. Henderson's book. He speaks of Gen. Dick Taylor, the brother-in-law of Mr. Davis, as a graduate of West Point. He was, in fact, never at West Point, but was with his father, Gen. Zachary Taylor, at the army posts, while he was a youth.